

agency may, in the case of law enforcement personnel, exclude meal time from hours worked on tours of duty of 24 hours or less, provided that the employee is completely relieved from duty during the meal period, and all the other tests in § 785.19 of this title are met. On the other hand, where law enforcement personnel are required to remain on call in barracks or similar quarters, or are engaged in extended surveillance activities (e.g., “stakeouts”), they are not considered to be completely relieved from duty, and any such meal periods would be compensable.

(c) With respect to firefighters employed under section 7(k), who are confined to a duty station, the legislative history of the Act indicates Congressional intent to mandate a departure from the usual FLSA “hours of work” rules and adoption of an overtime standard keyed to the unique concept of “tour of duty” under which firefighters are employed. Where the public agency elects to use the section 7(k) exemption for firefighters, meal time cannot be excluded from the compensable hours of work where (1) the firefighter is on a tour of duty of less than 24 hours, and (2) where the firefighter is on a tour of duty of exactly 24 hours, which is a departure from the general rules in § 785.22 of this title.

(d) In the case of police officers or firefighters who are on a tour of duty of more than 24 hours, meal time may be excluded from compensable hours of work provided that the tests in §§ 785.19 and 785.22 of this title are met.

§ 553.224 “Work period” defined.

(a) As used in section 7(k), the term “work period” refers to any established and regularly recurring period of work which, under the terms of the Act and legislative history, cannot be less than 7 consecutive days nor more than 28 consecutive days. Except for this limitation, the work period can be of any length, and it need not coincide with the duty cycle or pay period or with a particular day of the week or hour of the day. Once the beginning and ending time of an employee’s work period is established, however, it remains fixed regardless of how many hours are worked within the period. The begin-

ning and ending of the work period may be changed, provided that the change is intended to be permanent and is not designed to evade the overtime compensation requirements of the Act.

(b) An employer may have one work period applicable to all employees, or different work periods for different employees or groups of employees.

§ 553.225 Early relief.

It is a common practice among employees engaged in fire protection activities to relieve employees on the previous shift prior to the scheduled starting time. Such early relief time may occur pursuant to employee agreement, either expressed or implied. This practice will not have the effect of increasing the number of compensable hours of work for employees employed under section 7(k) where it is voluntary on the part of the employees and does not result, over a period of time, in their failure to receive proper compensation for all hours actually worked. On the other hand, if the practice is required by the employer, the time involved must be added to the employee’s tour of duty and treated as compensable hours of work.

§ 553.226 Training time.

(a) The general rules for determining the compensability of training time under the FLSA are set forth in §§ 785.27 through 785.32 of this title.

(b) While time spent in attending training required by an employer is normally considered compensable hours of work, following are situations where time spent by employees of State and local governments in required training is considered to be non-compensable:

(1) Attendance outside of regular working hours at specialized or follow-up training, which is required by law for certification of public and private sector employees within a particular governmental jurisdiction (e.g., certification of public and private emergency rescue workers), does not constitute compensable hours of work for public employees within that jurisdiction and subordinate jurisdictions.

(2) Attendance outside of regular working hours at specialized or follow-